

MAR 30 1959

FOIAb3b

Circ.: m. 54,389  
S. 64,793Front Page  
Edit Page  
Other Page

MAR 30 1959

Date:

CPYRGHT

## CIA Discredits Threat of War

THE Central Intelligence Agency's evaluation of the strength of the Soviet Union lends support to our basic policy of dealing firmly with the Russians in the upcoming foreign ministers' meeting and in possible, future summit talks.

When the Russian Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, first announced his intention to kick the Western allies out of Berlin and to negotiate a separate peace treaty with East Germany, the free world was somewhat awed by his exceptionally aggressive tone. As he continued his verbal barrage on this most serious point of contention in Europe, Western capitals were thrown into a quandary, fearing that worst had happened and that the Kremlin had made the decision to have its way in Berlin even at the risk of war.

As time moved along however, the Western governments came to realize that Khrushchev was up to one of his usual bluff games, but one involving somewhat delicate circumstances which still demand the utmost caution on our part.

**SPEAKING** in conventional military terms, there is no question about the city of Berlin being indefensible from the Western point of view. With a determined effort on the part of the East Germans, and more importantly Russia, to expel the West from Berlin, our forces would be hopelessly inadequate to stand against the advance. Therefore, the effective defense of Berlin's two million people can only be evaluated in terms of total nuclear war.

In turn, the risk of total nuclear war can only be estimated in terms of Soviet ability to come out the victor in such a holocaust.

The changed attitude of the Kremlin which has become evident in recent weeks would indicate that the idea of nuclear war at this time is not part of Soviet strategy, and she will therefore not wish to provoke the West into using its nuclear might.

The first indication of a weakening

in the Soviet stand on Berlin came when Khrushchev agreed to extend his original deadline for the evacuation of Western forces from the former Reich capital. His words since then have become still softer and he has accepted the Western proposition for a foreign ministers' conference to explore the advisability of a summit talk to which the West has tentatively agreed.

The conciliatory approach now emanating from the Kremlin, however, is not the only factor which stands as justification for the stern policy the United States has insisted upon in confronting the crisis over Berlin and Germany.

THE Central Intelligence Agency indicated publicly during the past week that the Soviet Union is neither ready nor preparing for war; that the Kremlin does not want a war although Communist Russia would fight if it must.

According to a high official of the CIA, Russian leaders decided 18 months ago that the Communist economy had to have 15 years of peace to achieve its internal development plans.

He said that the Soviet economy is by no means mobilized for war or preparing for war but is striking for a balance between military and other expenditures just as the United States is.

The official is quoted as having said also that the Soviet Union is certainly not ready to risk nuclear war over Berlin and that Khrushchev, instead, thinks he can force the West to "chicken out."

"If the West is resolute," he said, "then I believe that the Soviet Union will be the ones to back down."

THIS has been our contention all along and it is heartening that the CIA is sufficiently confident on this score to make such an open appraisal.

The lack of significant Communist retaliation in the face of Western activity to quell international disturb-

ances of importance in Suez, Quemoy and the Lebanon, also tends to confirm that internal reform and not further military aggression is the principal concern of Communist powers at this time.

In view of the CIA evaluation and the course of events in recent years, the United States and her allies are assured of approaching the conference table from a position of power superiority, Russian propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding.